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CHARTER

OF THE

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AND

CONSTITUTION

AS ADOPTED APRIL 2, 1878.

PROVIDENCE:
AKERMAN & CO.,
1878.

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OF THE

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

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PROVIDENCE:
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Charter.

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PASSED AT THE JUNE SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1822.

Whereas, Jeremiah Lippitt, William Aplin, Charles Norris Tibbitts, Walter R. Danforth, William R. Staples, Richard W. Greene, John Brown Francis, William G. Goddard, Charles F. Tillinghast, Richard J. Arnold, Charles Jackson, and William E. Richmond, have petitioned this General Assembly to incorporate them into a Society, by the name of the Rhode Island Historical Society; therefore,

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted*, That the aforesaid persons, together with such others as they shall hereafter associate with them, and their successors, are hereby constituted, ordained and created a body corporate and politic, by the name of *The Rhode Island Historical Society, for the*

purpose of procuring and preserving whatever relates to the topography, antiquities, and national, civil and ecclesiastical history of this State; and by the name aforesaid shall have perpetual succession; and by the same name, are hereby made able and capable in law, as a body corporate, to have, hold and enjoy goods, chattels, lands and tenements, to the value of five thousand dollars, exclusive of their library, cabinet and historical collections and antiquities, and the same at all times to dispose of; to have a common seal, and the same at pleasure to change and destroy; to sue and be sued, to plead and be impleaded, to answer and to answer unto, to defend and to be defended against, in all courts of justice, and before all proper judges; and to do, act and transact all matters and things whatsoever proper for corporate bodies to do, act and transact; and to establish and enact such a constitution and such by-laws as shall be deemed necessary and expedient, and provided that they be not repugnant to the laws of this State, or of the United States; and to answer to the breach of those laws such fines as they may deem fit.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the said corporation be further authorized and empowered to elect and qualify such officers as may by them be deemed necessary to be chosen at such time, and to hold their offices for such period, as the constitution of said corporation shall prescribe; and to appoint and hold such meetings as shall be thought proper.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That said Society shall establish two cabinets for the deposit and safe-keeping of all the ancient documents and records illustrating the history and antiquities of this State; one of said cabinets in the town of Newport, for the safe-keeping of the records of the early history of the southern section of the State, and the other in the town of Providence, for the safe-keeping of the historical records of the northern section thereof; and that the anniversary of said Society shall be holden in said Providence.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That Jeremiah Lippitt be authorized and empowered to call the first meeting of the corporation, within three months from the granting of this charter, giving public notice of the same.

AMENDMENT.

In General Assembly, January Session, 1878.

AN ACT IN AMENDMENT OF AN ACT ENTITLED "AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY," PASSED AT THE JUNE SESSION, 1822.

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:—

SECTION 1. That said Rhode Island Historical Society shall, from and after the passage of this Act, have and establish but one cabinet for the deposit and safe-keeping of its collections, and said cabinet shall be located in the city of Providence.

Constitution.

ARTICLE I.—Of Membership.

Section 1. The Rhode Island Historical Society shall be composed of Resident, Corresponding, Honorary and Life Members.

Sec. 2. No person shall be eligible as a resident member, unless, at the time of his election, he shall reside in the State of Rhode Island; nor shall any person be eligible as a corresponding or honorary member who shall not, at the time of his election, be a resident out of said State. Life members may be either resident or non-resident.

Sec. 3. No person shall be eligible as a member unless he be recommended by the committee on membership: and all votes on the admission of members shall be by ballot.

Sec. 4. Whenever a vote shall be taken on the admission of a member, and there shall be found three ballots against his admission, the presiding officer counting the votes, shall declare the election postponed until the next

regular meeting of the Society. At the next meeting, if the recommendation of the committee be not withdrawn, he may be admitted by the major vote of the members present and voting.

SEC. 5. Every corresponding or honorary member elect, who shall not acknowledge his membership in writing, or sign the constitution within one year from the time of his admission, shall not be considered a member of the society.

SEC. 6. Each resident member shall, on his admission, pay an admission fee of five dollars; and thereafter such tax or taxes as the society may impose, not exceeding three dollars, in any one year.

A member on the payment at one time of fifty dollars to the treasurer, may become a member for life, and shall thereafter be exempt from all assessments or annual tax, and shall be entitled to all the privileges of a resident member.

SEC. 7. Neglect to pay any tax for the period of one year after demand in writing from the Treasurer, shall be deemed a withdrawal from the Society; and the Treasurer is required to report the names of such delinquent members in order that they may be stricken from the rolls of the Society.

SEC. 8. Resident and Life members alone shall be entitled to vote at the meetings of the Society.

ARTICLE II.—Of Society Meetings.

Section 1. The Society shall hold four regular meetings in each year; on the second Tuesday in January, and on the first Tuesdays in April, July and October.

Sec. 2. Special meetings shall be called by the Secretary on the written request of the President, or any five resident or life members.

Sec. 3. Notice of all regular or special meetings of the Society shall be given by advertisement thereof or otherwise as the Society may direct.

Sec. 4. Seven resident or life members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE III.—Of Officers and their Duties.

Section 1. The officers of the Society shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Librarian and Cabinet Keeper, and as many Pro-Curators (not to exceed one in any town or city) as the interests of the Society may demand,—and the following Standing Committees, viz.: a Committee on Nomination of New Members, a Committee on Lectures and Reading of Papers, a Committee on Publications of the Society, a Committee on Care of Grounds and Buildings, a Committee on Genealogical Researches, and an Audit Committee. All Committees to consist of three Resident or Life Members, and all officers must be members of the Society.

SEC. 2. The officers of the Society shall be chosen at the regular meeting of the Society holden in January in each year, and shall hold their offices for one year and until others be elected in their places. In case the Society make no election at said meeting, they may do so at their next, or any other meeting regularly called, and they may fill any vacancy in any office at any regular meeting.

SEC. 3. The President shall preside at all meetings, preserve order, give the casting vote, and perform such other duties as usually appertain to such an office. In his absence, one of the Vice Presidents shall discharge his duties, and in their absence, the Society may appoint a chairman of the meeting.

SEC. 4. The Secretary shall keep a fair record of all the proceedings of the Society, and notify its meetings, and shall be the organ of communication of the Society.

SEC. 5. The Treasurer shall have charge of the pecuniary concerns of the Society, shall collect all admission fees and taxes, and shall pay all bills against the Society when properly audited. At the meeting in January he shall present his accounts, after they shall have been examined by the Audit Committee, and shall exhibit his books and papers to the Society when required.

SEC. 6. The Librarian and Cabinet Keeper shall safely keep in the cabinet of the Society, all books, manuscripts, papers, documents, and other articles committed to its charge. Members of the Society by consent of the Libra-

rian, shall have liberty to read or examine any book or manuscript in the cabinet, but will not be allowed to remove the same therefrom, unless by a special vote of the Society, and when thus removed, the person taking the same shall in each case sign a receipt therefor, conditioned to pay to the Society such sum of money as the Cabinet Keeper may deem proper, in the event of its non-return to the cabinet within three months from the date of receiving the same.

SEC. 7. The Pro-Curators shall solicit donations and contributions for the Society, shall endeavor to obtain new and suitable members, and shall in their respective districts further the influence of the Society, and act as its representatives in all matters, and shall at the annual meeting or oftener make report of their doings, and of matters of historic interest in their district or vicinity.

SEC. 8. "The Committee on Nomination of New Members," shall endeavor to increase the number of members of the Society, by propounding from time to time the names of such persons as they think will be desirable additions thereto, consent of such persons having been first obtained.

SEC. 9. "The Committee on Lectures and Reading of Papers," shall endeavor to have lectures and papers of a historical character read before the Society, as often as possible, in order to maintain and increase an interest therein.

SEC. 10. "The Committee on Publications of the Society," shall have charge of the printing and binding of all publications of the Society, unless otherwise ordered by special vote, and they shall from time to time recommend the printing of such matter in our collections or obtainable from other sources, as they may deem of importance and within the limit of our means.

SEC. 11. "The Committee on Care of Grounds and Buildings," shall have the general charge of the grounds and buildings of the Society, see that they are kept in good order, and have authority to contract debts for expense of the same, not exceeding in any one year one hundred dollars, unless by special vote of the Society.

SEC. 12. "The Committee on Genealogical Researches," shall seek to facilitate and promote genealogical studies, collecting, classifying and arranging available materials, and securing for the Society genealogical records for general reference.

SEC. 13. "The Audit Committee" shall examine all claims on the Society before they are presented to the Society to be acted on; and shall, before the January meeting of the Society, examine the Treasurer's accounts and report thereon.

ARTICLE IV.—OF AMENDMENTS.

This constitution may be amended or repealed by a a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular

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meeting of the Society, provided, that notice of such proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting.

ARTICLE V.

This constitution shall go into full effect immediately.

Resolved, That all constitutions, by-laws, acts or resolutions inconsistant with this constitution, are hereby repealed.

The above resolution and constitution were adopted April 2, 1878.

True copy,—attest:

AMOS PERRY,
Secretary.

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